

Reichenow (J. f. O. 1877, pp. 25, 103), is only known to me by the description, and I have placed it next to *C. melanops*, on account of its having blackish-brown lores ("schwarzbraunen Zügel") and being referred to as very near *C. plebeius* (p. 25); but when I find it compared with *C. jardinii* (p. 103), I feel less certain of its true position in my key, as it may be a connecting-link between *C. kirki* and *C. melanops*. It would be a great advantage if all new species which are not accurately figured were very fully described, and a key given to show their natural position amongst their most nearly allied species.

Cretzschmar has scarcely received fair credit for his valuable '*Atlas*,' which contains original descriptions and illustrations of many specimens collected by Rüppell in N.E. Africa, previously only known by the MS. names attached to the specimens by Rüppell.

VII.—Introduction to Gould's '*Birds of Asia*.'

By R. BOWDLER SHARPE*.

IT having been suggested to us by Mr. Sotheran, the proprietor of the late Mr. Gould's Ornithological Works, that some few introductory remarks on the completion of the '*Birds of Asia*' (one of the works left unfinished at Mr. Gould's death) would be acceptable to the Subscribers, we have attempted to give a brief outline of the history of Asiatic ornithology during the past thirty years. It is difficult for us, whose path has been smoothed by the labours of the excellent ornithologists who have devoted themselves to the study of oriental birds, to carry our minds back to the year 1850, when Mr. Gould commenced to write the present work on the *Birds of Asia*, at a time when such names as those of Hume, Blanford, Davison, David, Prze-walsky, Severtzoff, and Swinhoe were unknown to fame. In 1850 the golden age of ornithology was but commencing,

* [Reprinted, by permission, from the concluding number of Gould's '*Birds of Asia*,' recently issued.—EDD.]

'The Ibis' was not yet established, and such an idea as the calling into existence of a journal entirely devoted to Indian ornithology was undreamt of. Only one year previously had Gray completed his great work on the Genera of Birds, which tabulated and placed in order all the then known genera and species; and this was closely followed by the 'Conspectus Avium' of Prince Bonaparte and the 'Catalogue of the Museum Heineanum' of Dr. Cabanis. But although the three last mentioned works will always be celebrated for the order which they introduced into the Class *Aves*, their work did not affect Asiatic ornithology in particular, and the credit for first setting in order the ornithology of India rests with two naturalists—Jerdon and Blyth. Before Mr. Gould's work commenced, the former had finished his 'Catalogue of the Birds of the Peninsula of India,' while for many years Mr. Blyth had been engaged in publishing those important notes and synopses of Indian birds, in the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,' which even at the present day are studied with advantage by the ornithologist. Then, in 1849, appeared Mr. Blyth's 'Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the Asiatic Society,' wherein were incorporated the results of all his previous labours, as well as those of Jerdon. Another writer, Lord Arthur Hay, in future to be better known to the scientific world after his accession to the titles Viscount Walden and Marquis of Tweeddale, had also written one or two small papers on Indian birds; and Mr. Gould had himself published an illustrated folio work entitled 'A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains.' A great change, however, had taken place in our knowledge of Himalayan birds since the day when it was considered of importance to figure one hundred species from this part of India. This was due to the exertions of Mr. B. H. Hodgson, the British Resident in Nepal, who as early as the year 1836 commenced to publish papers in which he introduced to the notice of naturalists some animals of the greatest interest from the hill regions of Nepal. His enormous collections were presented by him to the British Museum in 1843 and 1845, together with a complete set of native drawings, which

are remarkable for their accuracy and give many details of the anatomy of the species figured. In 1844 Mr. Hodgson gave a complete catalogue of the Birds of Nepal in Gray's '*Zoological Miscellany*,' founded on the above-named drawings and his own ample collections. In 1849 he again presented the British Museum with a collection of animals, and gave largely to the museums of other countries also, Blyth's '*Catalogue*' testifying to his munificence as regards Calcutta. On his return to India his subsequent collections were given to the India Museum at Fife House; but after the closing of that establishment he again presented a large number of specimens to the British Museum, in 1859. Two lists of Mr. Hodgson's donations have been published by the Trustees of the last-named institution—one in 1846, and another in 1863.

In commencing to write the '*Birds of Asia*,' Mr. Gould followed the majority of naturalists in treating the continent according to its political boundaries. In those days it must be remembered that Dr. Sclater had not revolutionized the study of ornithology by his division of the earth into natural zoo-geographical regions, nor had Mr. Wallace arisen to point out to us the demarcation between the Indo-Malayan and Austro-Malayan subregions, while the existence of a Mediterraneo-Persic subregion had not been forced upon the attention of ornithologists. We have not space here to discuss in detail the zoo-geographical divisions of the continent of Asia; but the natural divisions into which it is partitioned may be studied to advantage in two works—Mr. Wallace's '*Geographical Distribution of Animals*,' and Captain Elwes's paper "*On the Geographical Distribution of Asiatic Birds*," published in the '*Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*' for 1873.

It will therefore be understood that, when the late Mr. Gould commenced his work, the area which he intended to embrace was a very large one; and it is not surprising that thirty-three years should have been insufficient to complete less than a quarter of the undertaking. Species from Palestine to the westward, and from the Moluccas to the east,

have been figured in the 'Birds of Asia;' and it is equally certain that a larger number of new species have been discovered by ornithologists in the course of a year than were figured by Mr. Gould in the single part of the 'Birds of Asia' which he issued annually. It may not be uninteresting, however, to glance rapidly over the countries included in Asia by the author of the present work, and to estimate the increase of knowledge which has taken place since he commenced his gigantic task. Of the ornithology of Siberia but little was known up to the year 1850, beyond the writings of the old Russian travellers Pallas and Gmelin. Since the above-mentioned date, the explorations of Middendorff, of Schrenck, and of Radde have greatly increased our knowledge, while the travels of Dr. Finsch on the river Ob have added many interesting particulars respecting that region. One of the most important expeditions, however, to this portion of Northern Asia was that undertaken by our countryman Mr. Henry Seebohm, who in 1877 visited the valley of the Yenesei, discovered the breeding-places of many birds (unknown up to that date), and brought back large collections of animals from that little-known portion of the globe. His experiences and adventures are related in his work 'Siberia in Asia,' one of the most entertaining books of travel which it has ever been our lot to peruse. Central Asia remained for a long time a *terra incognita* to the naturalist; but about the year 1872 Dr. Severtzoff commenced to publish the results of his journeys through Turkestan, while at the same time the mission to Yarkand despatched by our government, under the leadership of Sir Douglas Forsyth, was also successful from an ornithological point of view; and the book 'Lahore to Yarkand,' published by Mr. A. O. Hume and Dr. Henderson the naturalist to the expedition, is full of interest to the ornithologist. South-western Asia, or at least that part of it embraced in the Mediterraneo-Persic subregion of modern writers, still requires considerable exploration before we can be considered to have a thorough knowledge of its ornithology. The birds of the Caucasus have been treated of by Ménériés; and more recently Professor Bogdanoff

has published a work on the species inhabiting this region, which, however, from being written in Russian, will, like Dr. Severtzoff's '*Fauna of Turkestan,*' be unintelligible to the great majority of readers. Filippi's '*Viaggio in Persia*' also contains a useful list of the birds met with by him; but by far the most important work on the zoology of Persia is that of Mr. W. T. Blanford, who has given a very complete account of the birds obtained by him during his travels from Baluchistan through Persia to the Caspian. This work on Eastern Persia also contains an account of the collections made by Sir Oliver St. John during his residence near Shiraz. When we come to Afghanistan we have the excellent observations of Captain Hutton on the Birds of Kandahar, published in 1845 and 1846, and the more scattered notices of the collections made by Dr. Samuel Griffith in the same country, as recorded by Messrs. Horsfield and Moore in their '*Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the East India Company.*' Besides these there are some excellent papers by Colonel Swinhoe, Captain Wardlaw Ramsay, and Serjeant Barnes, which give an account of the birds observed by them during the last Afghan war.

As regards British India, we have already alluded to the state of its ornithological record up to the year 1850, when the labours of Blyth and Jerdon had done so much to prepare the way for the successful issue which has since uninterruptedly followed. Ceylon appears to have been the next place to be explored by working ornithologists; and Mr. E. L. Layard contributed in 1853 some very interesting notes on the birds of that country, supplementary to the catalogue published by Dr. Kelaart in his '*Prodromus Faunæ Zeylonicæ.*' But in the year 1854 a most important work on Indian ornithology was issued, which we consider to have had a great effect upon the recent studies of ornithologists.

This was the '*Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the East India Company,*' a work which bears on its title-page the names of Dr. Horsfield and Mr. F. Moore, but which is known to have been prepared entirely by the last-named naturalist. The importance of this Catalogue con-

sists in the fact that it gathers together into one compass all the scattered literature of Indian birds which existed up to that period, and it is especially valuable as containing a connected list of references to Mr. Blyth's papers spread over many volumes of the Asiatic Society's 'Journal.' It must therefore never be forgotten that in that year ornithologists possessed for the first time a nearly complete literature of Indian birds, so far as Accipitres, Passeres, and Picariæ are concerned. A lull then appears to have taken place in Indian ornithology, broken only by occasional papers from Mr. Blyth, Colonel Tickell, and other field-naturalists, until the year 1862, when Dr. Jerdon brought out the first volume of his 'Birds of India.' This book, which was published in three octavo volumes, was completed in 1864; and, equally by naturalists at home as by field ornithologists in India, it has been recognized as the standard work on Indian ornithology. Many years must elapse before its utility will be impaired; and it is certain that every one writing on the birds of India has to take Jerdon's book as his starting-point. Mr. Blyth's able critique on this book in 'The Ibis' added considerably to its importance; and in 1872 Dr. Jerdon himself contributed a series of supplementary notes to the last-named journal: these have been duly recorded in a second edition of the 'Birds of India,' published under the superintendence of Colonel Godwin-Austen. A very interesting MS. work by the late Colonel Tickell, with beautifully painted pictures of Indian birds, has also been presented to the library of the Zoological Society of London.

If, however, Indian ornithology is indebted to an incalculable extent to the labours of Blyth and Jerdon, there is at least one naturalist whose claim to equal rank with the above-named pioneers will be admitted by every future historian of the subject. This is Mr. A. O. Hume, who for the past fifteen years has worthily trod in the footsteps of his renowned predecessors; and one cannot but regret that neither Blyth nor Jerdon have survived to see the results of their early studies as pushed towards such a brilliant conclusion by Mr. Hume. To attempt to write on Indian birds

without consulting the pages of '*Stray Feathers*,' which is the curiously chosen title of Mr. Hume's journal, would be as impossible as for any one to essay to write a history of Neotropical birds without referring to the works of Dr. Sclater and Mr. Salvin. Suffice it to say that Mr. Hume has succeeded in interesting a large number of ardent naturalists in a study of the birds of India; and although he has been singularly fortunate in the number and calibre of his coadjutors, the credit of the extraordinary advance which the study of Indian ornithology has made during the last twelve years is mainly due to the energy of Mr. Hume himself. Not only does his journal contain useful lists of species from various parts of the Indian peninsula, but important essays will be found therein on the ornithology of Yarkand, Afghanistan, Sindh, Tenasserim (occupying an entire volume of 524 pages), and the Malayan peninsula. In England, too, considerable energy has been shown in the study of Indian ornithology. Besides the uninterrupted issue of the '*Birds of Asia*,' this country was indebted to the late Marquis of Tweeddale for many of the most valuable memoirs ever written on birds. His large collections and his intimate knowledge of ornithological literature rendered him the first authority on Asiatic ornithology in this country; and his untimely death was mourned by the entire scientific world.

The islands in the Bay of Bengal have been thoroughly explored on Mr. Hume's behalf by Mr. W. Davison, probably one of the best collectors that science has ever known; and it is to this same gentleman that we are indebted for very successful ornithological results in Tenasserim and the Malayan peninsula. Captain Wardlaw Ramsay has also largely contributed to our knowledge of the avifauna of the Andaman Islands. The history of the '*Birds of Ceylon*' by Major Vincent Legge is simply a model work. Having resided in the island for seven years, he devoted his attention to its ornithology, and has published the results of his studies in a large quarto volume of 1237 pages.

No connected account has yet been published of the birds of Assam and the hills of North-eastern Bengal, such as the

Khasia, Naga, Garo, and Munipur hills. McClelland collected a certain number of specimens in Assam, which were presented by him to the India Museum, and are now in the national collection. They are most wretchedly preserved, and are without any indication of locality, sex, or date of capture. To Colonel Godwin-Austen we are indebted for scattered lists of the birds procured by him and his assistants during the surveys of the hill-ranges of North-eastern Bengal; and a connected account of the ornithological results obtained by these expeditions would be of the greatest assistance to students. These hill-ranges seem to have been well explored by Colonel Godwin-Austen, who has described some beautiful new species, and whose collection of birds from these localities is very extensive.

The province of Arracan is almost unknown as regards its ornithology. In 1875 the late Mr. Blyth prepared a list of the "Birds of Burmah;" but unfortunately his death prevented the publication by his own hands: it was, however, most ably edited by the late Marquis of Tweeddale [then Lord Walden], who not only added his own information on the subject, but included the birds recorded shortly before by Mr. Hume from Tenasserim, and the important collections made by Captain Wardlaw Ramsay in the State of Karen-nee. We have not yet alluded to the labours of an excellent naturalist in Pegu, Mr. Eugene W. Oates, who has quite recently incorporated the results of his former papers along with those of other field-naturalists in an admirable 'Handbook to the Birds of British Burmah.' This work gives a concise account of the author's own researches in Pegu, and of those of Mr. Davison and Captain Bingham in Tenasserim. We may refer to this work, one of the best of its kind ever written, as proving by the numberless instances in which Mr. Hume's name is quoted, the immense influence which he has exercised on Asiatic ornithology.

Here must be mentioned also the work by Dr. Anderson on the zoological results of the second expedition to Yunnan. Unfortunately this expedition did not succeed in penetrating further than the frontiers of that province; but many in-

teresting observations were made during the brief stay of the above-named naturalist in Yunnan, and on the route traversed by the expedition through native Burmah. The ornithology of Cochin China is well represented in the Paris Museum ; and Dr. Tiraud has published a useful list of the birds of that country.

With the ornithology of China the name of the late Consul Swinhoe will always be inseparably connected. Numerous contributions from his pen were published in '*The Ibis* ;' and two complete lists of the birds of China were issued in the '*Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*' for 1863 and 1871 respectively. In 1877, however, a very complete work on Chinese ornithology appeared from the pens of Père David and Dr. Oustalet, whose book, entitled '*Les Oiseaux de la Chine*,' embodies not only Mr. Swinhoe's discoveries, but likewise the results of the travels of Père David throughout China as well as those of Colonel Przevalsky in Mongolia and Thibet. A complete account of the ornithological observations made by the last-named traveller was also translated from the Russian, and published in the late Mr. Dawson Rowley's '*Ornithological Miscellany.*'

We may here remark on the explorations of Dr. Dybowski and other Russian travellers in the region of Lake Baikal and Eastern Siberia, an account of which has been written by Dr. Taczanowski in the '*Bulletin*' of the French Zoological Society. As regards Japan, there appeared in 1850 the beautiful illustrated work on the Fauna Japonica by Temminck and Schlegel, wherein are many fine pictures of birds, some of them drawn by Professor Schlegel himself, while others are early products of that great zoological draughtsman Joseph Wolf. After that but little was written on the ornithology of the Japanese Islands until 1867, when a list of the birds collected by Mr. Henry Whitely (since celebrated for his explorations in Peru and Guiana) appeared in '*The Ibis* ;' but more recently two good field-naturalists, Captain Blakiston and Mr. H. Pryer, have published a list of the Birds of Japan ; and Mr. Seebohm has also devoted some attention to the ornithology of this part of Asia.

Lastly we have to consider the ornithology of the Indo-Malayan subregion. In 1854 a list of the birds of Malacca collected by Dr. Cantor was commenced by Mr. F. Moore. But the best accounts of the birds of the Malayan peninsula are those of Mr. Hume in 'Stray Feathers' (founded on the collections made by Mr. Davison in the western half of the peninsula) and of Lieut. Kelham in 'The Ibis.' Mr. Davison has proved by his researches that many of the Malayan birds range into Southern Tenasserim; and it is much to be regretted that this energetic collector has been disabled by the state of his health from exploring the eastern half of the Malayan peninsula, which is zoologically absolutely unknown. It will remain for some future explorer, therefore, to visit this dangerous and unknown region, when, as an ornithological result, it will doubtless be discovered that many species inhabiting the Eastern Himalayas and the hills of Burmah and Tenasserim extend their range to the mountains of Java and Sumatra along the elevated ridge which forms the backbone of the Malayan peninsula.

For our knowledge of the ornithology of Sumatra we are still mainly dependent upon the collections of the old Dutch travellers, Solomon Müller and others, who penetrated the mountain-ranges of the island; if we except the successful expedition made by Dr. Beccari in 1878, and the more recent researches of Mr. H. O. Forbes, lately recorded by Mr. F. Nicholson. The collections made near the coast, such as those of the late Mr. E. C. Buxton in Lampong, have mainly resulted in the procuring of common Malayan and Bornean forms.

But little has been written on the ornithology of Java. Horsfield's list of the birds procured by him, and subsequent observations by Dr. Bernstein, Mr. H. O. Forbes, and Mr. Vordeman comprise nearly all we know of the ornithology of the island; but rich collections are contained in the Leiden Museum, and the British Museum likewise possesses a good series prepared by Mr. Wallace, and by no means the least valuable result of that naturalist's expedition to the East.

With the ornithology of Borneo we are much better acquainted, thanks to the excellent work of Count Salvadori, the '*Uccelli di Borneo*,' which contains a complete record of the avifauna of the island up to the year 1874. Since that date Mr. Alfred Everett and his brother Mr. Henry Everett in Sarawak, Mr. Hugh Low and the late Governor Ussher in Labuan and in the provinces of Brunei and Lumbidan, and Mr. W. B. Pryer in Sandakan, have added greatly to our knowledge of the birds of Borneo, and have shown that the relations of its avifauna are mostly with that of Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula, that few forms are peculiar to the island, and that it receives a considerable migratory influx of Siberian and Eastern Asiatic forms which make Borneo their winter home.

Our knowledge of the avifauna of the Philippine Islands has also been vastly increased since Mr. Gould commenced the present work. Many species had been recorded by Sonnerat and the older writers; but their accounts were often confused and meagre, and it was not till the late Mr. Cuming had visited the archipelago that British ornithologists received any definite and trustworthy information respecting the birds of the Philippine Islands. The Prussian expedition to Eastern Asia resulted in the publication of a list of Philippine birds by Dr. von Martens, which, however, was not very satisfactory; but the explorations of Dr. A. B. Meyer were of a more enduring importance, as it was principally on his collections that the excellent memoir on the Birds of the Philippine Archipelago by the Marquis of Tweeddale was founded. Following closely upon this, we ourselves published a list of the birds obtained by Dr. Steere, who visited many of the islands on which no naturalist had before set foot, and whose collections contained a large number of new forms. Perhaps the most interesting result of Dr. Steere's expedition was the demonstration that the Philippine Island of Palawan possessed a distinct Bornean and, therefore, Malayan element—a result which has been amply confirmed by Mr. Alfred Everett in the same island. The latter naturalist was sent by Lord Tweeddale; and his expedition has proved

to be one of the most important ever undertaken in the Indian region. Like Dr. Steere he also visited many islands not before trodden by an ornithologist, and obtained a large number of beautiful novelties.

Such is a brief retrospect, as far as our experience allows us to make it, of the progress of oriental ornithology since the year 1850, when Mr. Gould issued his first part. Every one must admit that it would be far easier now to attempt such a work, although so vast is the extent of the Indian region that each year records a large increase in our knowledge of Asiatic birds. It would almost seem as if we had now once more reached a period of quiescence, such as supervened upon the publication of Horsfield and Moore's 'Catalogue' and Jerdon's 'Birds of India.' Let us hope that this is not the case, and that Mr. Hume, who has done so much for the increase of our knowledge of Indian birds, will not allow his pen to remain dry, that Colonel Godwin-Austen will, on the termination of his present important work on Indian Mollusca, be induced to give us a connected catalogue of the birds of North-eastern Bengal, that Captain Wardlaw Ramsay will publish a catalogue of the Tweeddale collection, and that Mr. Blanford will not allow his retirement from India to interfere with the publication of his useful works on the zoology of that portion of the globe.

VIII.—*Inauguration of the American Ornithologists' Union.*

ON the 26th of September last, in pursuance of the notice reprinted in our last Number (*Ibis*, 1883, p. 580), a convention of American ornithologists was held in the Library of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, to organize an American Ornithologists' Union. We extract the following account of the proceedings on this important occasion from the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club':—

"This call was sent to a little less than fifty of the more prominent ornithologists of the United States and Canada, selected mainly in reference to their scientific standing, but